

STA Member Profile

Murray Glassford • Manager, NE Parks Maintenance • Community Services Department • City of Mississauga

Murray Glassford and the City of Mississauga were the hosts of the Sports Turf Association's 17th Annual Field Day on Thursday, September 16, 2004. We were among the first to visit the newly renovated Mississauga Valley Community Centre, one of four facilities improved and renewed under the City's Redevelopment Project. We are pleased to profile both Murray and the Mississauga Valley Community Park in this issue of our newsletter.

What is your role with the City of Mississauga?

As manager, I am responsible for the day-to-day maintenance activities of the outdoor parkland setting and monitoring current and capital budgets, addressing resident and internal concerns, and that catch-all "all other duties as assigned."

What kind of team do you work with?

I have three supervisors as direct reports, with 32 full time staff and up to 70 temporary and student labourers and volunteers. I also am included on the NE Management Team – Community Centres/Arenas, Community Development and Parks; internal Department Teams – Park Planning & Development for NE Projects, IT Development, Health & Safety; external Department Teams – LitterNot, Graffiti, CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

What are you and your team responsible for?

We are responsible for providing safe and clean parkland facilities for the residents of Mississauga including horticulture

displays; sports field turf and facilities; maintaining playgrounds, play areas, pathway systems, park furnishings; litter and graffiti removal; general turf and natural areas; and winter maintenance programs.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

At times I feel like a juggler. It's a challenge to empower staff, provide resources, co-ordinate, set schedules, meet deadlines, follow policy and procedures, add in the occasional special request, educate the public and control spending, all at the same time.

What is the most satisfying part, what makes the job worthwhile for you?

Everything is made worthwhile when I go to a hort display or a sports field and see the quality of care and personal attention, knowing that the staff has made every effort in making the area safe and clean.

What is the biggest misconception about your job?

The biggest misconception is that we can provide additional services, re-direct funds, and improve standards while cutting our own budget funding, as if money was no problem!!!!

What is your educational/employment background?

I started working summers in my grandfather's potato patch and on my uncle's farm. Graduated from Humber College in the hort program and started working with the City of Mississauga in the Forestry Section. I have spent the last 19 years in a management position. Looking to retirement in 2008.

Tell us about your family.

I live in Mississauga with my wife Cheryl. Besides our 4 adult children we have two dogs, Emma (Retriever) and Harley (German Shepard), and four very tolerant cats, Bear, Buster, Baxter and Miss Allie.

What do you enjoy doing outside of the workplace?

I enjoy motor cycling, golf, playing with model trains, collecting sports cards and watching TV with my favourite beverage, not all the time but as time allows. I would say my claim to fame would be that I have been involved in minor hockey (Mississauga North Stars AA) for the past 18 years.

What direction(s) would you like to see the industry, as a whole, move towards?

I think that it is important that the "landscape" industry continue to promote itself as a key component or a resource in the protection of our environment and improvement in the quality of life. Without landscapes, natural or man made, we would be living in who knows what!

What do you consider to be the biggest benefit of being a STA member?

Being a part of STA allows me to keep in touch with a number of venues (educational, business contacts, equipment and products and personal ideas) necessary to do my job and plan for the future. The sharing of information, research and development of programs or facilities is the key to more successes than failures. We can all learn something from each other; it's all in how we use these tools. STA provides the contacts to the tools. ♦